

Twenty years ago, it would have been difficult to imagine how significant technology would be in our daily lives. Advances, such as the Internet, have improved the accessibility and availability of information and broadened our communications capabilities. Innovation is the key to providing better products and services to consumers at better prices, as well as making it easier for us to communicate and do business around the country or around the world.



Universal Broadband

Large areas of Upstate New York currently lack access to high-speed internet. This access is no longer a luxury. Our region's ability to compete in the global economy depends on high-speed access to the internet for creating, and helping residents find, new job opportunities and ensuring our nation's children are equipped with the skills necessary to compete in the workforce. In many areas, local geography limits or prohibits access to wireless services and low population densities make network built-out prohibitively expensive for cable or fiber optic providers.

That is why I was proud to support the inclusion of \$7 billion for broadband expansion in H.R. 1,

the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This funding will help bring rural areas into the digital age, allow communities like ours to grow their economies, and create jobs through the building and maintenance of broadband networks. I was also pleased that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) submitted a National Broadband Plan to Congress in March 2010 that presented a roadmap for connecting 100 million households to affordable and high-speed broadband. I believe it should be one of the top priorities of the Federal government to ensure that every American has access to high-speed internet.

I have continued to fight to fight to ensure that Upstate New York receives its fair share of Recovery Broadband dollars. In July 2009, I was part of a bipartisan group from Congress that wrote to the Secretaries of Agriculture and Commerce, who have jurisdiction over federal broadband programs, urging them to clarify and streamline regulations to ensure funding reaches our region. In August 2010, I called the Administrator of USDA's Rural Utility Service on behalf of a number of broadband projects with pending applications for remaining Recovery funds.

To date, more than \$50 million dollars in Recovery Bill funding has been awarded to broadband expansion projects that will directly benefit our area, including:

- [More Than \\$3.7 Million in Recovery Bill Funding for Upstate New York Broadband](#)
- [\\$9.5 Million in Recovery Bill Funding to Expand Broadband at New York Libraries](#)
- [Nearly \\$40 Million in Recovery Bill Funding for Central New York Broadband](#)

Network Neutrality, Open Internet

One of the more heated debates in Congress in the past few years - though not always in the spotlight - is over "net neutrality," the concept that every user should have equal access to the internet. This also includes the idea that companies that control internet access should not discriminate between the different technologies used to connect to the internet. These are notions with which I completely agree.

The internet is one of the most powerful forces for innovation that the world has ever seen. I believe that any changes that fundamentally alter the free and open nature of the internet would negatively affect both innovation and consumer access. The most efficient market-based approach is one that empowers American consumers to determine the success or failure of a

website, application, or service.

In March 2010, the Supreme Court ruled that the FCC lacked the authority to enforce its existing net neutrality rules as they relate to internet services. In response, the FCC is considering a number of different options in order to enforce open access rules, including possibly reclassifying broadband as a telecommunications service.

I joined over seventy of my Congressional colleagues in writing to FCC Chairman Genachowski in May 2010, voicing concerns over this approach because I am concerned that reclassification would subject the internet to regulations that were developed over the last half century for land-line telephone services. This would jeopardize further expansion of the internet.

The current regulatory uncertainty threatens to stifle the growth of our economy and deter the creation of jobs. It is my sincere hope that the FCC can effectively enforce internet access rules without taking the unnecessarily broad step of reclassifying broadband internet service as a telecommunications service. Rest assured that, as a strong advocate of open and easy accessibility to the internet, I am committed to doing everything in my power to protect and guarantee that right.